

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GENEVA 03080 271812Z
ACTION IO-14

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TAGS: ILO, PLAB
SUBJECT: 205TH ILO GOVERNING BODY, FIRST WEEK

1. THE FIRST WEEK OF THE 205TH SESSION OF THE ILO GOVERNING BODY (GB) WAS DEVOTED ENTIRELY TO COMMITTEE MEETINGS. TRIPARTITE GROUPS ARE MEETING SEPARATELY TODAY (FEB. 27) TO BE FOLLOWED BY THE GB PLENARY FEBRUARY 28 THROUGH MARCH 3. NO FINAL DECISIONS WILL BE MADE UNTIL THE PLENARY MEETS. THIS MESSAGE SUMMARIZES MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS SO FAR.

2. PROGRAM, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE: THIS COMMITTEE HAD BY FAR THE MOST SIGNIFICANT AGENDA - THE MOST IMPORTANT ITEM BEING "MEASURES TO DEAL WITH THE FINANCIAL SITUATION RESULTING FROM THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE UNITED STATES". THE DIRECTOR GENERAL INFORMED THE COMMITTEE THAT THERE IS REASON FOR "CAUTIOUS SATISFACTION" WITH THE ILO'S FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY SITUATION. CONSEQUENTLY, HE CALLED FOR NO FURTHER PROGRAM CUTS FOR THE 1978/79 BIENNIUM BEYOND THE \$36,600,000 AGREED TO AT THE NOVEMBER 1977 GB SESSION. THE DG ANNOUNCED THAT THE RESPONSE TO HIS REQUEST FOR VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS OF \$5,700,000 TO BRIDGE THE REMAINING BUDGETARY

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PAGE 02 GENEVA 03080 271812Z

GAP HAS BEEN VERY POSITIVE, WITH THOSE PROMISED OR VIRTUALLY RECEIVED ALREADY AMOUNTING TO ABOUT \$3,500,000. WITH THIS RESPONSE ALREADY, HE SAID HE WAS ENCOURAGED TO BELIEVE THAT THE TARGET WOULD BE REACHED. THE DG ALSO REPORTED THAT IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO TERMINATE FEWER ILO OFFICIALS THAN ORIGINALLY CONTEMPLATED, DUE TO EARLY RETIREMENTS, REDEPLOYMENTS AND VOLUNTARY

RESIGNATIONS AT A HIGHER LEVEL THAN EXPECTED.

3. SEVERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS QUESTIONED THE NEED TO MAINTAIN THE ILO WASHINGTON OFFICE IN VIEW OF THE U.S. DEPARTURE FROM THE ILO AND THE PROXIMITY OF THE NEW YORK OFFICE FOR ESSENTIAL CONTACTS WITH WASHINGTON-BASED INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES. THE DG DEFENDED THE NEED FOR THE WASHINGTON OFFICE ON THE BASIS OF ITS OUTSTANDING RECORD AS AN INCOME PRODUCER IN PUBLICATIONS SALES. HE HINTED THAT THERE WERE REASONS BEYOND THESE PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS (READ U.S. REENTRY), BUT SAID THE QUESTION OF MAINTAINING THE OFFICE WOULD BE REEXAMINED IN THE LIGHT OF EVENTS.

4. MOST OF THE DG'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING PROGRAM AND BUDGET WERE ENDORSED WITHOUT MUCH DEBATE, INCLUDING A STAFF SUGGESTION TO IMPLEMENT TEMPORARY MAXIMUM TEN PERCENT REDUCTION IN SALARY IN ORDER TO AVOID TERMINATION OF APPOINTMENTS. THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL ITEM CONSIDERED WAS THE DG'S RECOMMENDATION THAT THE ILO NOT APPLY THE NEW UNIFORM REDUCED SALARY SCALE RECOMMENDED BY THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY FOR GENEVA-BASED GENERAL SERVICE EMPLOYEES. THE COMMITTEE FIRMLY REJECTED THIS PROPOSAL (SEE GENEVA 3079) WHICH WOULD HAVE MADE THE ILO THE ONLY HOLDOUT IN APPLYING THE NEW SCALE.

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PAGE 03 GENEVA 03080 271812Z

5. STANDING ORDERS AND THE APPLICATION OF CONVENTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: THE MAIN ITEM OF INTEREST WAS A PAPER ON "OPERATION OF EXISTING MACHINERY AND PROCEDURES FOR ESTABLISHING FACTS RELATING TO THE APPLICATION OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR STANDARDS". THIS ITEM REFERRED TO THE TWO RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE JUNE 1977 CONFERENCE CONCERNING, RESPECTIVELY, THE STRENGTHENING OF TRIPARTISM IN ILO SUPERVISORY PROCEDURES AND THE PROMOTION, PROTECTION AND STRENGTHENING OF FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION, TRADE UNION AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS. THE COMMITTEE AGREED TO A NUMBER OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO STRENGTHEN THESE PROCEDURES, INCLUDING DIRECT CONTACT AND A GENERAL REVIEW OF THE STANDING ORDERS GOVERNING THE EXAMINATION OF REPRESENTATIONS UNDER ARTICLE 24 OF THE CONSTITUTION (PARA 15). THE MOST IMPORTANT RESULT WILL BE TO ASSURE THAT THE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON APPLICATION OF CONVENTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS WILL HAVE A BASIS FOR REVIEWING APPLICATION OF STANDARDS.

6. COMMENT: DESPITE ITS CONCENTRATION ON PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM THE DEPARTURE OF THE U.S., GB MEMBERS

HAVE NOT EXPRESSED ANY RESENTMENT TOWARDS THE U.S.,
EITHER IN THE MEETINGS OR PRIVATELY TO U.S. UNOFFICIAL
OBSERVERS. THEY ARE PROCEEDING IN A PRACTICAL WAY TO
REPAIR THE DAMAGE TO ILO'S FINANCES THROUGH PROGRAM
REDUCTION AND VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS. OUR FRIENDS
WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO SEE THE U.S. RETURN AND
ARE PREPARED TO COOPERATE TOWARD THAT END BUT THEY ARE
NOT COUNTING ON IT. VANDEN HEUVEL

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